

# *Secrets of* **AUTOMOBILE SALESMANSHIP**



**R  
381  
.4562622  
Secrets**

# SECRETS OF AUTOMOBILE SALESMANSHIP

*A Helpful Manual of Important Sug-  
gestions and Advice Essential to  
Successful Salesmanship*



*By the EDITORIAL STAFF of the  
AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE DIGEST*



1921  
AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE DIGEST  
CINCINNATI

Copyright, 1921  
AMERICAN AUTOMOBILE DIGEST  
All Rights Reserved

CLARENCE H. ROSA LIBRARY  
LANSING PUBLIC LIBRARY  
LANSING, MICHIGAN

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
FOREWORD .....	1

CHAPTER I.

ESSENTIAL REQUISITES TO SUCCESS IN  
SELLING AUTOMOBILES.

Ambition — Determination — Education — Self-Confidence — Industry — Enthusi- asm — Honesty — Thoroughness — Self- Respect—Poise—A Fair Understanding of Human Nature—Politeness—Tact— Aggressiveness—Cheerfulness—Physical Fitness—Good Appearance.....	3
---	---

CHAPTER II.

ANALYSIS OF THE BUYER'S MIND.

The Social Faculties—The Selfish Faculties —The Persistent Faculties—The Higher Faculties .....	26
---	----

CHAPTER III.

CLASSIFICATION OF BUYERS.

The Conceited or Swell-headed Buyer—The Argumentative Buyer—The Cold or Reserved Buyer—The Intelligent or Rational Buyer—The Nervous or Irrita- ble Buyer—The Cautious or Safety- first Buyer—The Aggressive Buyer—The Shrewd or Cunning Buyer—The Digni- fied Buyer—The Mercenary or Close- fisted Buyer—The Easy-going Buyer— The Irresolute Buyer—Motives for Buying .....	45
---	----

employers by closing the sale that the other man loses.

Every man interested in the selling of automobiles, whether already experienced or ambitious to learn, will appreciate the helpfulness of these articles.

THE PUBLISHERS.

# The Secrets of Automobile Salesmanship.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### Essential Requisites to Success in Selling Automobiles.

Every man's success depends in some measure upon his ability to sell. Every transaction, whether large or small, involves salesmanship to some degree. We sell our knowledge, our skill, our goods, and our services.

A good many men have the idea that salesmen are born—not made. Such an idea is not based upon facts. It is true that some men have a born liking for selling that enables them to respond more readily to a system of training and to apply the knowledge gained

through experience in such a way as to attain a greater degree of success than those whose temperaments are not so well adapted to the art of selling. On the other extreme are those men whose makeup is so entirely opposite to that required for selling that no degree of training could make them successful salesmen. The average man, however, who has a desire and a determination to succeed can become a successful salesman through the proper training of the qualities outlined here, which are considered essential to what is known as scientific or trained salesmanship.

Before a man can successfully apply salesmanship to such a highly complex mechanical product as the modern automobile, it is necessary that he know himself. He must understand the requisites that are helpful in building a foundation for success. He must know how

many of these requisites he possesses and just what is necessary to train and develop those which he does not possess. A workman cannot succeed at any trade without the proper tools, and before learning to use them he must first know what tools he needs and how to use them. Likewise, a salesman cannot become skilled in selling unless he first knows what qualities in himself constitute the proper foundation for success, and unless he has developed those in which he finds himself weak to the point of usefulness.

It is the purpose of this book to outline the requisites for successful automobile salesmanship in such a way as to enable the reader to take an inventory of his stock in trade and to determine just what kind of foundation for selling he possesses.

The requisites required for the highest type of automobile sales-

manship do not differ materially from those required in any branch of salesmanship, and we are obliged, therefore, to treat this subject in a general way.

For convenience and reference, we shall list the essential qualities without any reference to the order of their importance, it being very difficult to classify them in that manner, for the reason that those qualities which might strongly influence one prospect may be of only minor importance in the case of another:

1. Ambition.
2. Determination.
3. Education.
4. Self-confidence.
5. Industry.
6. Enthusiasm.
7. Honesty.
8. Thoroughness.
9. Self-respect.
10. Poise.

11. A fair understanding of human nature.
12. Politeness.
13. Tact.
14. Aggressiveness.
15. Cheerfulness.
16. Physical fitness.
17. Good appearance.

### **Ambition.**

Ambition as applied to salesmanship means the desire for rank or eminence in the selling field. The man who has a strong ambition to become a highly successful salesman and a "bull-dog" determination to back it up is a hard man to keep down. The desire for power, which comes with rank or eminence, has been at the bottom of practically every great achievement. This same desire for power in selling, with its lucrative reward, has made many a salesman successful. Disraeli, with no fortune but his own ambition and ability,

handicapped by race prejudice, rose to be Prime Minister of England—the only member of his race to reach that eminence. It was he who said: “As a rule, the most successful man in life is the man who has the most information.” The most successful salesmen are those who know the most about salesmanship and who have had the most experience in applying that knowledge. To struggle through the hard work and the difficulties of obtaining that knowledge requires a strong ambition.

### **Determination.**

You must have the determination to succeed. You cannot get very far without it. Determination is the quality that drives a man forward in spite of difficulties and discouragements. In practically every case this quality means the difference between success and fail-

ure. Especially is this true in selling, which is a game in which the rewards are great and where disappointments are very frequent. You cannot hope to sell every prospect—some failures are bound to result—and the man who, failing to sell one prospect, has the determination to pick out the causes for his failure, to attempt to remedy them and to work just that much harder to sell the next, is the man who will eventually become the best salesman. Perseverance, or that form of determination which causes a man to try until he succeeds, is one of the best assets a salesman can have.

### **Education.**

A moderate education is a distinct advantage in selling. It becomes of vital importance in selling automobiles. A man cannot think logically, reason forcibly, or express himself properly, all of which are

necessary elements in the sale of a mechanical product, without some education. Some of the larger automobile manufacturers, recognizing the advantage of education in the selling of automobiles and as a foundation for salesmanship, have instituted courses of study designed to equip the salesman for more efficient work. To any man who is not afraid of hard work, the lack of education becomes easy of correction. He has only to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the modern night school with its free classes, the public library with its volumes of good reading of the kind that broadens the mind, the correspondence schools with courses of study at moderate prices, and the many ways of acquiring knowledge by home study. A large majority of those who have attained success in any branch of the business world have been self-made

men—men who had the courage to overcome obstacles by study and hard work.

### Self-Confidence.

Self-confidence, which is that feeling on the part of the salesman that he is mentally equipped to combat any objection on the part of the prospect, is not only a product of experience in selling, but comes with *a thorough knowledge and belief in the merits of your product*. The lack of self-confidence makes a convincing sales talk next to impossible, because any feeling of uneasiness or weakness when talking to a prospect cannot be entirely hidden and the prospect is generally very quick to take advantage of it. Over self-confidence, commonly known as conceit or "swell-head," is just as dangerous to success as the lack of self-confidence and should be strenuously avoided.

**Industry.**

Industry means steady attention to business. A large number of men starting in sales work have the idea that the only requisite to sales success is the wearing of good clothes and a smooth tongue. On the contrary, success in selling calls for a tremendous amount of hard work, not only in the study and development of those essentials which we are attempting to outline here, but more particularly in the study of the practical application of those principles which govern every sales transaction. An industrious salesman is frequently called a "Plugger." He loves hard work. He is not afraid to tackle a difficult sale and to keep at it until he either succeeds or fails. He is the type of salesman who wins success by keeping everlastingly at it. This type succeeds more readily than any other and is in great demand by sales executives.

### **Enthusiasm.**

Enthusiasm is that quality which imparts "life" to your personality. It is the active principle of so-called "personal magnetism." It means inspired earnestness. There is a wonderful selling power in rightly directed enthusiasm. It has a tendency not only to arouse your own full mental powers but also to compel others to share your own mental state. It spreads like a contagious disease. A salesman who convinces the prospect by the tone of his voice or his gestures that he is in earnest—that he believes his own sales story—has created an atmosphere that is favorable to the sale. The prospect, if he does not share the salesman's enthusiasm, is more apt to give closer attention to what is being said to him. Enthusiasm, however, should not be allowed to take the form of exaggerated statements regarding either quality or performance.

**Honesty.**

A dishonest salesman very seldom succeeds. There may be exceptions to the rule, but modern business is now demanding that type of honest salesman who may be defined as one having:

(1) An honest regard for the company's time;

(2) An honest regard for the company's policies.

An honest regard for the company's time means that it is not wasted. The salesman is on the job trying to make every minute count. He does not get into the habit of loafing between calls, but so arranges his work as to employ his time to the best advantage.

The failure to understand and honestly carry out the company's sales policies is a very frequent cause of failure. Progress cannot be made unless the salesman is in whole-hearted sympathy with the

policies that are laid down for him by the management. These policies are generally based upon a wide experience with which the salesman may or may not be familiar and he should, therefore be willing to either accept the judgment of those who determine them or insist upon being convinced of their correctness by those who are able to explain the reasons for their adoption. The company and the salesman must pull together—not in opposite directions.

### **Thoroughness.**

The ability to complete a sales transaction without leaving any detail in doubt constitutes thoroughness in handling sales. The high-grade salesman will leave no strings tied to the sale. He will make the transaction as clean-cut and as simple as it is possible to make it. It is very difficult to get

salesmen to realize the importance of this quality and its bearing upon their success. It is a very common experience for sales managers to receive orders from salesmen which are not complete — some detail, such as terms of payment, shipping instructions, etc., still remaining to be worked out by the home office. In many cases considerable time and correspondence are necessary to get orders into acceptable form. A good rule to follow is to make each order complete in every detail and to handle the entire transaction in such a way as to leave nothing to the imagination.

### **Self-Respect.**

It is important that the salesman cultivate the quality of self-respect. Self-respect means self-reliance, dignity, courage and independence — not conceit or snobbishness.

Learn to believe in yourself, to look the prospect in the eye without flinching. Get rid of the impression that you are unworthy. Self-respect is a sure antidote for the feeling of bashfulness, inferiority and fear in the presence of others.

### **Poise.**

Poise is that quality which enables the salesman to balance himself mentally without letting his feelings or emotions run away with him. It enables one to keep himself well in hand and to remain master of the situation. Perhaps the homely illustration of the gyroscope, which is a peculiar mechanical contrivance consisting of a whirling wheel within a framework, will help you to better understand the quality of poise. The peculiarity of the gyroscope lies in the arrangement and action of the wheel which, by its motion always

maintains its balance and equilibrium no matter in what position the apparatus is put. The point is—be a mental gyroscope. Cultivate the faculty of maintaining your mental balance in any situation. If a prospect should suddenly spring some new argument which has a tendency to disturb your feeling of security, take it calmly; retain all of your mental faculties; play for time, if necessary, to think out the best way of meeting this new argument against your proposition; be natural in action and manner no matter what happens—this is Poise.

### **A Fair Understanding of Human Nature.**

Books have been written upon the study of Human Nature and its relation to sales success. In our limited space it is impossible to do more than to emphasize the im-

portance of understanding the workings of the minds of others. If you know the strong and weak characteristics of people you will be able to control and influence them. Our thoughts manifest themselves through our nerves, causing the nervous system to play an important part in recording those marks upon the head, face and form which nature stamps upon us all. You should carefully watch the effect of your sales arguments upon the face of the prospect. Note particularly the expression of the eye and try to determine what it signifies. Try to ascertain the reasons for the actions of people and you will soon find that the majority of them can be grouped into special classes depending upon their temperaments. The cultivation of this faculty of understanding human nature is one of the most interesting phases of sales work.

**Politeness.**

Politeness is a valuable asset to any salesman. Especially is this true of the retail automobile salesman whose prospects are of both sexes. A salesman's politeness or courtesy must not be artificial—those outward acts and remarks that are simply a counterfeit of the real thing. Instead, it must be a respectful behavior toward others which does not consist merely of the formal rules of etiquette, but of an inner sympathy and understanding of others. One does not need to be a raw “jollier” to be polite. True politeness comes from within and it is almost impossible to imitate it successfully.

**Tact.**

This quality is defined as the skill of adapting words or actions to circumstances. It is a queer combination of “Worldly Wisdom” and “The Golden Rule”—a mix-

ture of the ability to speak and do unto others as you would like to have them speak or do unto you under similar circumstances. You have probably met men in your experience who seemed to have the faculty of doing or saying the right thing at the right time. Such men are tactful. In practical salesmanship tact towers far above talent. Salesmen who possess it are more apt to be successful than those who do not, because they are quick to take advantage of every opportunity of doing or saying the proper thing. The quality of tactfulness can best be acquired by putting yourself in the prospect's place and attempting to determine what you would want the salesman to say or do under the same circumstances.

### **Aggressiveness.**

The aggressive salesman is alert to every possibility. He follows up every opportunity relentlessly. He

is always fighting for business regardless of the condition of the market. He is full of "pep." He never allows himself to be found on the defensive. He never waits for something to turn up—he makes it turn up. He leads and makes the prospect follow. Develop this quality—force things to come your way—be aggressive.

### **Cheerfulness.**

A bright, cheerful attitude is a magnet of success to a salesman. People often give preference to those who possess it and pass over the "grouchy" individual of merit in favor of the man of less merit, but who possesses the "sunshine" in his personality. The Human Wet Blanket is not a welcome guest, while the salesman who manages to be cheerful is always welcome. How often have you heard the expression, "I like to see that

fellow—he cheers me up.” Learn to radiate cheerfulness.

### **Physical Fitness.**

Health is a wonderful asset in any undertaking, for to be mentally keen you must be physically fit. Salesmanship calls for sharp mentality, logical and clear thinking, and quick decision, all of which are less likely to be found in an unhealthy person. The best insurance of success a man can have is a healthy body. Take plenty of exercise, sleep with plenty of fresh air, avoid over-eating, and in so far as is possible observe those simple rules of hygiene which preserve the health and quicken the mind.

### **Good Appearance.**

Every salesman who wishes to make a favorable impression should give considerable attention to personal cleanliness and neat-

ness. The prospect's first impression of a salesman is very often a lasting one. The body should be well bathed; the hair trimmed and neatly brushed; the face cleanly shaved; the teeth well brushed; the nails clean; the shoes polished; the necktie and collar clean and clothes carefully brushed. Wear as good clothes as your means will permit—clothes that give neither the appearance of shabbiness nor of being dressed up. Do not overdress or wear extreme styles. Avoid the smell of liquor on the breath or perfumery on the clothes. These simple things go far toward creating the favorable impression that a salesman should create in approaching a prospect.

The qualities which have been briefly outlined above all play some part in the success of any man who enters the selling field. They are not confined to the automobile in-

dustory alone—they are fundamental. Study them exhaustively and you will be prepared to take the next step in your study of salesmanship, which will consist of an analysis of the buyer's mind—the mind against which you must match yours.

## CHAPTER II.

### Analysis of the Buyer's Mind.

**A**S a writer upon salesmanship has said, "The buyer's brain is the board upon which the selling game is played. The faculties of the buyer's mind are the men which the salesman moves or guides at will as he would checkers upon a checker board."

In order to play any game intelligently it is necessary to know the rules of the game and to acquaint yourself with the nature of the mind of your opponent. What sort of a player is he? What method will he employ to beat you? What are his strong and weak points? These are all questions to which you would give considerable thought if you were going into the game to win.

Selling automobiles can be likened to a game played between the mind of the salesman and the mind of the buyer. To win, the salesman must know something about the buyer's mind and how it works. He must know what to expect in dealing with the various types that constitute the automobile buying public.

The analysis of an automobile buyer's mind will not differ essentially from that of any other class of buyers because the reaction of the buyer's mind manifests itself in much the same manner regardless of the thing to be purchased. In considering the various faculties described below, which direct the impulses and determine the actions of the different buyers, we shall attempt as much as possible to link our suggestions as to the proper method of handling the buyer with the problems that confront the automobile salesman.

The faculties of the buyer's mind may be divided into four distinct groups, as follows:

The Social Faculties, occupying the lower-back part of the head and sometimes giving the appearance of fullness back of the ears, consist of:

Friendship, or Love of Companionship.

Inhabitiveness, or Love of Home.

Amativeness, or Love of the Opposite Sex.

Conjugalitv, or Matrimonial Inclination.

Parental Love, or Love of Offspring.

The Selfish Faculties, occupying a portion of the upper-back part of the head and the region just above the ears, consist of:

Combativeness, or Love of Opposing.

Destructiveness, or Love of Breaking Through.

Vitateness, or Love of Life.

Alimentiveness, or Love of Appetite.

Bibateness, or Love of Drink.

Acquisitiveness, or Love of Gain.

Secretiveness, or Cunning.

Cautiousness, or Prudence.

Approbateness, or Love of Praise.

Self-Esteem, or Self-Reliance.

The Persistent Faculties, located in a portion of the upper-back part of the head, consist of:

Continuity, or Patience.

Firmness, or Steadfastness.

The Higher Faculties, located in the front-top of the head, consist of:

Conscientiousness, or Moral Principle.

Hope, or Optimism.

Veneration, or Reverence.

Benevolence, or Human Kindness.

### The Social Faculties.

*Friendship, or Love of Companionship.*—The majority of buyers have this faculty in some degree—the desire to make friends or the love of “good fellowship.” The degree to which a buyer reveals this faculty will depend largely upon the personality of the salesman. The salesman should show by his manner that he is ready to cultivate the friendship of the buyer upon equal terms. A respectful and courteous demeanor will go far toward accomplishing this result.

*Inhabitiveness, or Love of Home.*—Home is a sacred word with most men. They are quick to resent any slur upon their community. They like to hear favorable comment about their immediate surroundings. The salesman should boost the buyer’s town, his county, his state, and show interest in the locality whenever the opportunity

presents itself. It will make a strong appeal to this faculty.

*Amativeness, or Love of the Opposite Sex.*—In selling a buyer in which this faculty is excessively developed guard against any reference to sex matters if you wish to keep his attention.

*Conjugality, or Matrimonial Inclination.*—A buyer possessing Conjugality is very apt to be greatly influenced by his wife's wishes. This faculty can be easily recognized when a buyer refuses to decide without consulting his wife. The salesman should immediately press for an interview or a demonstration at which she can be present. Whenever this faculty reveals itself in a buyer's make-up, convince the wife—the rest will be easy.

*Parental Love, or Love of Offspring.*—An appeal to the interests and the comfort of the buyer's chil-

dren will have a marked effect upon a man possessing parental love. The influence of children is oftentimes so strong that it dominates the actions of those they love. An appeal to the faculty of Parental Love is very clearly illustrated by a story appearing in Whitehead's "Principles of Salesmanship."

"A resourceful automobile salesman had vainly tried to sell a luxurious high-powered car to a wealthy customer who, two or three years before, had bought a comparatively inexpensive runabout. The buyer acknowledged that the high-powered car was all that was claimed, yet he remained obdurate despite the salesman's varied and eloquent arguments. After half a dozen fruitless interviews, the salesman determined to appeal to an instinct which he had so far neglected. He fitted the car in question with an old set of tires and

drove it to the home of the buyer while the latter was away on business. He then invited the two daughters of the house to take a trial trip in the car, explaining that if they would add their influence to his sales argument their father would probably purchase it. A trial ride followed by an evening's filial coaxing brought a prompt purchase."

### **The Selfish Faculties.**

*Combativeness, or Love of Opposing.*—This faculty discloses itself in the buyer by a strong desire for argument. In making an appeal to this faculty the salesman should apparently give in upon some minor point that has very little influence in the making of the sale. Such a buyer will derive so much enjoyment over winning a point in the argument that he will be in a frame of mind to be persuaded upon the main points of the

selling talk which the salesman wishes to drive home. Coax this faculty—never try to drive it.

*Destructiveness, or Love of Breaking Through.*—A buyer who possesses this faculty takes great pleasure in any departure from customary practice and procedure. He delights in something new. An explanation of new motor car features that represent a deviation from recognized standards of motor car construction—a development either in engineering practice or body lines will arouse this buyer's interest.

*Vitateness, or Love of Life.*—The faculty of Vitateness causes one to have a great fear of death, or injury. A thorough description or explanation of those features of a motor car which have a tendency to make the car reliable and to reduce the chance of accident through breakage of any part of the mechanism will have a marked

influence in making the sale. This influence will be more pronounced if the buyer drives his own car.

*Alimentiveness, or Love of Appetite.* — "Wine and Dine" the buyer in whom the faculty of Alimentiveness, or Love of Appetite, is strongly developed. A good meal will go farther than a logical and well-delivered sales talk. This faculty very often accompanies the faculty of Friendship, or Love of Companionship, and when so found can be conveniently used to advantage by the salesman having similar characteristics.

*Bibativeness, or Love of Drink.* — This faculty does not necessarily imply the love of alcoholic drinks. Where alcoholic drinks are avoided by buyers in which this faculty is rather pronounced, however, their appetite may run to soft drinks. Experience proves that it is best

for the salesman to disregard this faculty altogether unless personal friendship exists.

*Acquisitiveness, or Love of Gain.*

—The desire for gain represents the most important of the motives for buying. It is the foundation of all commercial or business enterprise. To satisfy the desire for gain which is present in some degree in minds of all buyers the salesman must be prepared by a thorough knowledge of his car and by experience gained through the actual operation to show the buyer a saving either in the initial cost of the car as compared with other cars of the same class, or in the cost of its operation, repair, and upkeep.

There is a growing tendency among automobile buyers to disregard the initial cost and to pay more attention to such things as appearance, the ease with which repairs can be made, second-hand value, and most important of all—

economy of operation. This tendency provides the automobile salesman with a much greater variety of selling features from which to select his sales argument. Keep the buyer's mind away from the initial expenditure and pound upon those features that make the car economical to operate. The ability of the salesman to show the buyer a profit, as in the case of the wholesale automobile dealer, or a saving, as in the case of the retail buyer, will in practically every case create interest favorable to the sale.

*Secretiveness, or Cunning.*—When carried to excess this faculty is a very undesirable one. It very often results in trickery or deception. When dealing with buyers in whom this faculty manifests itself the salesman should be careful to discount all statements or promises made by them and should so arrange his selling argument as to allow himself to be apparently de-

ceived in regard to some detail of minor importance. The self-satisfaction thus gained through a small victory will suffice to throw them off their guard and open the way for the main points of the sales argument.

*Cautiousness, or Prudence.*—As a rule the cautious automobile buyer is slow to place confidence. In appealing to this faculty the salesman should give a complete explanation of all details of the car, especially those upon which he expresses doubt, and should attempt by perfectly open and frank statements to create confidence.

When this faculty is developed to excess it causes the buyer to be suspicious and afraid to make up his mind. An overly cautious buyer can very seldom be pressed.

Every selling argument should contain an appeal to this faculty as most buyers possess a certain amount of innate cautiousness of

human nature which makes them unwilling to take chances and to prefer the path of safety.

*Approbativeness, or Love of Praise.*—This faculty can be successfully approached by an apparent “falling in” with the opinions of the buyer who possesses it. Use flattery—jolly him along. He is very susceptible to praise of any kind and is willing to absorb anything that satisfies his egotistical nature.

*Self-Esteem, or Self-Reliance.*—Self-Esteem differs from Approbativeness in this essential: a buyer possessing it, while appreciating his own powers and qualities in much the same manner as a buyer having the faculty of Approbativeness, does not blind himself to his own faults. This faculty is characteristic of most self-made men. Carried to extremes Self-Esteem appears in the form of an autocratic, overbearing, dictatorial

disposition. The salesman should not attempt to force suggestions upon a buyer exhibiting Self-Esteem. He should acknowledge by his tone and manner the buyer's right to think for himself and present his sales argument in such a way as to allow him to make his own decision with reference to its merits. While it is necessary to show proper deference to this buyer's opinion, a cringing attitude should never be adopted. The salesman should maintain his self-respect, but at the same time give the buyer the satisfaction of being apparently just a little ahead or upon a little higher plane of intelligence.

### **The Persistent Faculties.**

*Continuity, or Patience.*—This faculty produces conversatism. Whether it is developed to a greater or lesser degree the judgment of the buyer is affected by it.

It also causes the buyer to be inclined to stick to the old and to distrust the new practices or methods. In making an appeal to this faculty the salesman should dwell upon the length of time his company has been manufacturing motor cars, the fact that their product has earned a reputation in the industry and with the automobile buying public, and the soundness of their manufacturing and sales policies. He should avoid placing emphasis upon any new-fangled idea.

*Firmness, or Steadfastness.*—A buyer possessing Firmness is generally "set in his ways." Obstinacy and stubbornness are products of this faculty. Do not attempt to drive him. If possible, get him interested in your proposition before he has a chance to make up his mind or to become prejudiced in favor of a competitor. Endeavor to put a different light upon this

buyer's opinions. Get him to say "Well, that alters the situation." Make a flank rather than a direct frontal attack.

### The Higher Faculties.

*Conscientiousness, or Moral Principle.*—It is a pleasure to deal with a buyer in whom this faculty has become strongly seated. He has a high sense of justice, rights of others, truth and duty. He dislikes deception, mis-statements or exaggerations in any form. He admires frankness and candor. The salesman in making a sale appeals to this faculty and should therefore stick to plain facts and adopt a straightforward manner that will inspire confidence.

*Hope, or Optimism.*—Buyers who have the happy faculty of being able to look upon the future with a hopeful attitude and who delight in the cheerful side of life can be greatly influenced by enthu-

siasm upon the part of the salesman. They relish a good cheerful talk more than anything else.

*Veneration, or Reverence.*—Buyers revealing this faculty are generally law-abiding citizens and have great respect and reverence for authority, testimonials and recommendations. Their judgment is influenced greatly by example. The salesman should endeavor to determine whether any of the influential and highly respected persons in the community who are driving the particular car in which he is trying to interest the buyer are known to the buyer. Stress upon the names of those men will make the most powerful appeal to this faculty.

*Benevolence, or Human Kindness.*—The personality of the salesman will play a big part in dealing with this faculty, which reveals itself in the buyer in the form of sympathy, kindness, generosity and

## 44 *Automobile Salesmanship*

friendliness. The judgment of this buyer is apt to be swayed by emotion and sentiment rather than by reason or logic.

Each buyer has a full set of faculties as outlined above. Some are highly developed, others are subdued or inactive. A close and careful study of the proper method of appealing to these faculties separately will enable the salesman to more readily detect the combinations as they actually appear in individuals and to prepare the proper sales arguments to be addressed to them.

Continue to study the mind of the buyer—it is an essential of successful salesmanship.

## CHAPTER III.

### Classification of Buyers.

**J**UST as the seven primary colors of the spectrum combine in numerous ways to produce varying shades of color, just so do the separate faculties of the buyer's mind, described in the previous chapter, combine with the physical make-up in individuals to produce what is ordinarily known as "temperament."

The reader has often heard the expression, "That man has a nervous temperament," or "He possesses an artistic temperament." These are only general classifications of temperament, however, for as a result of the numerous faculty combinations which are possible, there are many shades of temperament that could very properly be

put under the general classification of "artistic," and yet they may differ widely in certain respects.

Human nature is so varied in its outward manifestations, and the different shades of temperament are so blended together that an attempt to study them here would be more confusing than instructive.

For our purpose, we shall carry the classification of buyers only far enough to bring out a few faculty combinations that are very often met with in selling, and to point out a few of the physical characteristics that suggest these combinations. By carefully studying these different general types, the salesman will soon be able to determine, after brief contact with the prospect, what his probable mode of reasoning will be, his motive for making the purchase, and the kind of selling appeal to make.

Most buyers fall into one or more of the following classes :

1. The Conceited or Swell-headed Buyer.
2. The Argumentative Buyer.
3. The Cold or Reserved Buyer.
4. The Intelligent or Rational Buyer.
5. The Nervous or Irritable Buyer.
6. The Cautious or "Safety-First" Buyer.
7. The Aggressive or Wrath-Provoking Buyer.
8. The Shrewd or Cunning Buyer.
9. The Dignified Buyer.
10. The Mercenary or Close-Fisted Buyer.
11. The Easy-Going Buyer — The Good Fellow.
12. The Irresolute or Changeable Buyer.

### The Conceited or Swell-Headed Buyer.

*Mental Characteristics.* — The faculty of Approbativeness, or Love of Praise, very highly developed.

*Physical Characteristics.* — The skin upon the forehead very often has a tight appearance without any wrinkles; lips curl upward at the corners of the mouth; a projecting lower lip; jaws and the lower part of the face larger than the upper; a flat chin and prominent cheek bones.

It is not a very difficult thing to pick out a conceited buyer without reference to his physical characteristics. He will generally undertake to air his own opinions without loss of time. He dearly loves praise and is very susceptible to flattery. In dealing with him, avoid direct contradiction. The sales argument should be brought out in the form of questions such as, "Does not your own experience suggest the

truth of what I say?" or, "What is your opinion upon this point?" By letting him feel that you place a great deal of confidence in his judgment, you satisfy his conceit to such an extent that very little opposition is displayed to the main points of the selling talk. By adopting the manner of one who is willing to learn from him, the salesman readily makes a friend of the conceited buyer and creates an atmosphere favorable to the sale. An attempt to disagree with him openly makes the sale next to impossible.

### **The Argumentative Buyer.**

*Mental Characteristics.* — The faculties of Combateness, or Love of Opposing; Destructiveness, or Love of Breaking Through; Approbativeness, or Love of Praise, and quite frequently Conscientiousness, or Moral Principle, are the

most prominent in this buyer's mental attitude.

*Physical Characteristics.* — A pronounced ridge near the bridge of the nose; eyebrows that project downward beyond the outer corner of the eye; and a rise in the upper lip near the center of the mouth, displaying the front teeth. Conscientiousness is denoted by four or five perpendicular lines between the eyes.

Among automobile buyers there are many people who have well-defined likes and dislikes, especially among those who have driven cars. One buyer, for instance, may express a strong preference for an overhead valve engine, while another may be equally partial to the L-head type. Such preferences, when well-seated, have a tendency to promote argument if the buyer has an argumentative nature. Of the two classes of argumentative

buyers—those who are conscientious and sincere in their beliefs and those who love to argue simply for the pleasure they get out of it—the automobile salesman more frequently encounters the conscientious type. In dealing with them the salesman should endeavor by counter-arguments to create doubt in their minds regarding the correctness of their own opinions. If this is done their honesty will compel them to acknowledge the force of it. In dealing with an argumentative buyer who lacks conscientiousness, the salesman can secure the advantage by yielding a few of the minor points, after which it will be found to be much easier to impress him with the main selling argument.

**The Cold or Reserved Buyer.**

*Mental Characteristics.*—A combination of Self-Esteem and Firmness.

*Physical Characteristics.*—Well-defined lips; upper lip full, with the center rather stiff; eyebrows lying close to the eyes, with the hairs running parallel; angular, knotted forehead, and a long nose that slightly droops at the tip.

The easiest way to destroy the reserve and stubbornness which this type of buyer exhibits is to find his hobby. Every man has a hobby, and will generally warm up to those who reveal interest in it. If this buyer's hobby happens to be flowers—inform yourself upon that subject. If it happens to be golf—learn enough about the game to converse freely upon it. A little careful search or inquiry will discover the hobby that represents the weak place in this buyer's armor, and when once the salesman has broken his reserve it will not be difficult to get his ear for the selling talk.

**The Intelligent or Rational Buyer.**

*Mental Characteristics.* — All faculties well balanced.

*Physical Characteristics.*—Large pupils in the eyes; wide space between the tip of the ear and the outer corner of the eye; ruffled, irregular eyebrows; the borders of the ear only slightly folded over; forehead nearly square across the brows and the upper part of the forehead retreating slightly, but very full just above the eyebrows.

This type of buyer depends almost entirely upon his reason and judgment for decisions. He is not swayed by emotions or sentiment. Good, sober, logical sales argument is the only kind that will appeal to him. The salesman should take great pains to point out the features of the car and to present reasons for their design and adoption. He should avoid making exaggerated statements regarding the construction of the car or its performance,

as there is great danger that this type of buyer will detect the inaccuracy. Such detection would inevitably lead to the loss of the buyer's confidence. The sales argument should be entirely confined to facts and confirmed figures.

### **The Nervous or Irritable Buyer.**

*Mental Characteristics.*—A mixture of Combateness or Love of Opposing; Approbativeness or Love of Praise; poor digestion and disordered nerves.

*Physical Characteristics.*—Thin, long nose, very often pointed; nostrils that are both long and narrow; fullness under the eyes; quick motions or other signs of nervous energy; oftentimes slight build, small bones and muscles and thin lips.

This type of buyer is not infrequently met with, especially in large cities. He is generally vain and resentful of criticism, his atti-

tude being such as to destroy the patience of the salesman, who to successfully handle him must exhibit genuine self-control. He must also refrain from argument of any description, answer the buyer's criticisms carefully, courteously and without openly contradicting him. This type can be soothed into calmness by a cool, confident and even-tempered demeanor and by giving prompt and intelligent answers to questions, and when in that mental state the right impression can be created by tactfully and without any evidence of antagonism explaining away his objections or opinions.

**The Cautious or "Safety-First"  
Buyer.**

*Mental Characteristics.* — This buyer has developed the faculties of Cautiousness or Prudence and Continuity or Patience to a very high degree.

*Physical Characteristics.*—Nostils that seem to lie flat to the face and the nose sometimes terminates in a thin, pointed tip.

In the selling of automobiles the salesman will meet with buyers that have developed the faculty of cautiousness in different degrees, depending upon their personal experience in driving them. The "Safety-First" movement and the numerous automobile accidents have had a tendency to make the average automobile driver cautious. Some are very conservative and fearful of any radical change in design or a departure from standard practice in car construction. In dealing with this type of buyer the salesman should likewise be conservative and old-fashioned in his talk and avoid giving the buyer the idea that his company entertains any new-fangled ideas. He should dwell upon the reputation of the car, the great number in use,

and if possible cite instances where the car is owned by those who are among his acquaintances.

**The Aggressive Buyer.**

*Mental Characteristics.* — Destructiveness, or Love of Breaking Through; and Self-Esteem, or Self-Reliance, are combined in this buyer in such a way as to make him slightly offensive in his dealings with other people.

*Physical Characteristics.* — A strongly defined ridge or prominence at the base of the nose near the bridge, with full upper lip.

This type of buyer is inclined to take the sales interview into his own hands and to secure the advantage by trying to rattle the salesman. As in the case of the irritable buyer, the salesman should exhibit poise or self-control. This buyer's attitude is principally bluff—he is the fox terrier of the business world. The salesman should not allow

himself to be scared off, because, like the fox terrier, the bark is much worse than the bite. By suddenly assuming the same aggressive manner it is very often possible to call his bluff and put him on the defensive.

**The Shrewd or Cunning Buyer.**

*Mental Characteristics.* — The faculty of Secretiveness or Cunning is very highly developed.

*Physical Characteristics.*—A low and wide forehead and a great breadth across the nostrils.

The shrewd or cunning buyer can be likened to the fox. He will resort to all kinds of schemes or tricks to get the best of the salesman. He can be readily recognized by his unwillingness to meet a point directly. If this method should take the form of a straightforward manner he can sometimes be detected by the questioning look in his eyes. He generally wishes to take the initiative

after he is interested, and the salesman can, by tactful suggestions and by allowing him to think that he is having his own way, lead him along the line of his own argument. If this buyer indicates his love of praise, let him know by some word or act that his shrewdness is appreciated. The majority of cunning people take great pride in it and relish appreciation of that quality.

### **The Dignified Buyer.**

*Mental Characteristics.* — A large amount of Self-Esteem, combined with Approbativeness and a certain amount of Reserve, is responsible for this buyer's attitude.

*Physical Characteristics.* — The eyebrows well-defined and firmly arched and the forehead cut by one or two perpendicular lines between the eyebrows.

True dignity dislikes anything mean or underhanded. It is honest with itself and with others. True

dignity seems to be assumed by an individual without any exertion—it is spontaneous and involuntary. Whether the buyer's dignity be real or assumed, the salesman should recognize it easily and should attempt to influence him by the adoption of a quiet, open, straightforward and sincere manner. This buyer's sustained attention can be secured by a quiet discussion of the merits of the car. When he shows doubt, press the point with quiet but positive assurance.

**The Mercenary or Close-Fisted Buyer.**

*Mental Characteristics.*—Acquisitiveness, of Love of Gain, is generally found to be the most prominent of this buyer's mental faculties.

*Physical Characteristics.*—Forehead extremely wide; projecting under lip; upper lip arched from the nose when seen in profile; large

distended nostrils, and hair upon the eyebrows short.

This type of buyer is suspicious of the salesman and the car he is selling from the start. He is moved entirely by acquisitiveness, or love of gain. The arguments that interest him most are those that show him that the purchase of the car will either make him money, if he is a distributor or dealer, or save him money through its economy of operation, if he is a retail buyer. Any sales arguments that lead to either of these conclusions are eagerly received by him and arouse his curiosity and interest. The salesman should be frank and open in his manner, present his argument positively, but not antagonistically, and invite comparison with other cars if he has the points of comparison well in mind.

**The Easy-Going Buyer — The Good Fellow.**

*Mental Characteristics.* — Hospitality and the faculty of Friendship, or Love of Companionship, are developed to a high degree. This buyer's mental make-up very often includes a highly developed Alimentiveness, or Love of Appetite.

*Physical Characteristics.* — Fleshy or well-fed appearance; inclined to be broad-shouldered and deep-chested; much space between the eyebrow and the outer corner of the eye; prominence of chin in the middle; upright furrows in the cheeks leading from the corners of the mouth to the nose, and fullness of the cheeks near the corners of the mouth.

The automobile salesman frequently comes in contact with this type of buyer. They are congenial and easy to approach. It does not

necessarily follow, however, that an order can be secured with the same ease with which the approach can be made. Whitehead, in discussing this type of buyer, says: "The natural friendliness of his disposition makes him greet everybody cordially, but his practical business sense will cause him to drive a keen bargain or to postpone action if he thinks he will be benefited thereby." The cultivation of friendly relationships with this type of buyer is a big asset in influencing him to buy, especially where there is not much choice in comparing the price, quality or terms with those of a competitor.

**The Irresolute or Changeable Buyer.**

*Mental Characteristics.*—Entire lack of Firmness, Patience, or Decision.

*Physical Characteristics.* — A long, flat chin; large ears which are most strongly curved or folded at

to the purchase of an automobile.

There are two opposing influences which govern the buyer's action in every automobile sales transaction—one being his reluctance to draw upon his money reserve to make the purchase; the other being the advantage to be derived either in pleasure or profit from the possession of the car.

It is obvious, therefore, that a discovery of the proper motives (there may be one or several) which influence the buyer to make the purchase will be to the salesman's advantage, as he can the more intelligently direct his sales appeal.

The *desire for gain* is undoubtedly the strongest of the buying motives. It is involved in some form or other in every sale. A man buys because he gains something in pleasure or profit, or both. Therefore, every sales appeal should be directed in some measure to this

motive. In the promotion of truck sales, for instance, the entire substance of the sales argument must be based upon the purchaser's desire to save time or expense of transportation. Show the buyer a chance to save or gain and the salesman will have little difficulty in arousing his interest.

*Imitation*, another strong motive for buying automobiles, is instinctive in every buyer. We are imitators from childhood. An appeal to this instinct in man and woman can be used to great advantage in selling automobiles.

As a general rule, people delight in imitating others who are higher in the social scale. An alert salesman will be quick to refer the buyer to car owners whose names will carry influence. Many people buy a particular car because others in the community have bought it. That fact inspires confidence in the merits of the machine. An appeal

to imitation can best be made either at the opening of the interview, where it may serve to secure more favorable attention, or at the close, when it may be the means of helping the irresolute buyer to decide.

In the selling of automobiles an appeal to *affection* becomes of considerable importance. One of the greatest advantages to be derived from the use of an automobile is the healthful, inspiring, out-of-door life that it makes possible. From that standpoint an automobile is the best health insurance a man can have. It is not for the buyer alone—his wife and family can participate in his enjoyment. Consequently, an appeal to the affection of the buyer for those he loves may sometimes exert stronger influence than any other.

The *pleasure of possession* is not a motive for buying in the case of the truck buyer, but becomes of considerable importance in the sale

of passenger cars. While the automobile of today has become more of a necessity than a luxury, the pride and pleasure of possessing them still exists, and it is obvious that a clear description by the salesman of the many pleasures to be derived from automobile ownership will materially strengthen the sales argument in the majority of cases.

Quite often more expensive cars are purchased than the buyer originally intends, because the salesman appeals to the buyer's *pride* by pointing out the effect it will have upon his acquaintances. This is a plain appeal to the buyer's approbateness, or love of praise, which in this instance takes the form of a desire for the admiration of his friends.

*Caution* may also be a motive for buying. It can be appealed to, however, only in a comparative sense. For instance, we have already learned that the cautious

buyer must be reassured upon every point of which he is in doubt. He buys one make of automobile in preference to another because he has been convinced that the mechanical parts possess a wider factor of safety and thereby offer him greater security in its operation. By emphasizing the danger of a price advance when the buyer shows a desire for postponing his decision, or by a discussion of the importance of small depreciation referred to as large second-hand value as is possible in some cases, the salesman is making an appeal to that cautious instinct of the buyer to play safe.

Appeal to as many motives for buying as possible, and direct the most energy to those which seem to be strongest in the case of the immediate prospect. In emphasis of the importance of this phase of automobile salesmanship, we quote

a paragraph from a prominent writer upon this subject:

“An automobile salesman may have pictured the pleasure to be derived from the possession of the motor car; he may have convinced the prospect that his machine is as mechanically perfect as such a piece of mechanism can be, and that the cost of maintenance and operation is reduced to the lowest possible limit; but the appeal to pleasure, caution, and economy may fail if for reasons best known to himself the prospective purchaser has decided to deny himself the gratification of owning an automobile. In such a case the enterprising salesman seeks other arguments and modes of appeal in order to break down opposition. Success frequently depends upon resource in making use of other buying motives when the obvious arguments have failed.”

## CHAPTER IV.

### The Selection of a Car Agency.

THE selection of a car or truck agency, one of the important elements which determines the success of those who venture into the retail automobile field, is seldom given sufficient study and thought.

The automobile business, having expanded with almost incredible rapidity during the last few years, offers unsurpassed opportunities to scores of young men with sales or mechanical ability. Its rapid development from the manufacturing side has called for a corresponding development of marketing facilities, the most important of which is the car or truck agency.

Having long ago passed the speculative stage and having entered that period of development known

as the "elimination" period, the automobile industry has been placed upon a keen competitive basis. This is true of both passenger cars and trucks. In spite of the fact that the truck or commercial vehicle is a later adaptation of the automotive principle, the experience gained in the development of the passenger car, together with the constantly increasing demand for commercial vehicles of all capacities, accentuated by the demands of modern business, has resulted in developing this branch of the automotive industry to a stage comparable with that of the passenger car.

It is very obvious, therefore, that both passenger and commercial car agencies, as they are operated today, require much training and considerable capital.

**Capital Required.**

The amount of capital required depends chiefly upon the location, the type and price of the car or truck to be handled, and the nature of the agency's contract with the manufacturer.

In large cities or thickly populated districts, where the agency has ready access to a large number of buyers, where competition is more keen, and where the necessity for large advertising programs, more frequent demonstrations, large organizations, more elaborate displays and higher rent is more pronounced, a larger amount of capital is required for a permanent success than is the case in the rural communities or districts. This fact also suggests the advisability of placing the control of city agencies in the hands of a firm or company rather than an individual. Especially is this true in the case of

truck agencies, for the reason that business men, when buying in large quantities, prefer to deal with a concern backed by large financial resources rather than with an individual who may or may not be able to stand the financial strain attending the permanent establishment of such a highly complex and specialized business. In the rural districts, however, where personal acquaintance is depended upon to a large extent to make sales, there is an excellent opportunity for the individually controlled agency to succeed with a moderate capital outlay.

Since the amount of sales missionary work to be done before a substantial sales volume is reached depends largely upon the type of vehicle to be marketed, there is a relation between the type of vehicle selected and the amount of capital required. For instance, many city

agencies have been known to spend enormous sums of money during the first year without returns in an attempt to introduce the product of a new manufacturer who had not yet established a reputation and a public demand for it.

The price of the car or truck is also one of the factors determining capital outlay. The exact relationship varies with the nature of the agent's contract with the manufacturer and with the location. Some manufacturers require larger deposits than others. Their contract provisions with reference to the minimum quantity of cars or trucks to be taken by the agency may result in a condition which calls for quick financing, and their policy with reference to the handling of service and service parts very often becomes a prominent consideration, more especially where trucks are being marketed.

Very careful consideration must be given to the financial resources available in the selection of an agency.

**Location.**

The location of the agency is dependent—

- (a) Upon the available capital.
- (b) The buying power of the community or territory.
- (c) Personal acquaintance in the territory.
- (d) Transportation facilities.

The relation between the location of an agency and the available capital has already been covered in a general way. The possibility of securing financial backing in certain territories through personal acquaintance or through the friendship of others may be the deciding factor in the selection of an agency location. Good business judgment would suggest that the agency be

located where financial assistance could be readily obtained if necessary.

The buying power of the territory should also influence the location. A territory composed of thrifty, well-to-do farmers or business men, the large majority of whom are able to own and operate automobiles, would offer greater opportunities to a wide-awake passenger car agency than a territory in which the farming and business activity were stagnant. A reference to the bank clearings and consultations with bankers in the territory will serve to supply information of this character that cannot be gained by direct observation of the surroundings. As a general rule, industrial centers of moderate size, surrounded by good, tillable land, make the best car agency locations for individuals of moderate capital.

Sales resistance can be greatly reduced by the selection of a location in which the individuals controlling the agency have a wide personal acquaintance. Everything else being equal, preference should be given to such a location.

Agencies should be located, if possible, in districts providing railroad shipping facilities. Especially is this true in sections of the country where roads have not been improved and where cars cannot be driven overland during certain seasons of the year. *Sales should not be jeopardized by transportation delays if it can be avoided in the selection of the agency location.*

**Feasibility of Handling Both Trucks  
and Passenger Cars in the  
Same Agency.**

Analysis and experience shows that the best passenger car salesmen often prove colossal failures in marketing trucks. A very wide

difference exists in the handling of passenger and commercial car sales—they are so different, in fact, that it is almost impossible to handle the sale of both passenger cars and trucks with the same sales organization. A canvas of many of the well-known agencies showed 91 per cent using separate salesmen for passenger cars and trucks. It has also been proven that less than five per cent of the successful truck salesmen develop from the passenger car end of the industry.

Passenger car salesmanship does not call for the same exhaustive analysis of performance, cost of operation, and detailed study of the nature of the work to be performed by the vehicle as does truck salesmanship. Truck salesmen are dealing generally with business men whose methods have some similarity and where the element of femininity never enters, whereas the

passenger car salesman deals with all classes and kinds of men and women. It is obvious, therefore, that it is inadvisable to attempt to handle trucks and passenger cars with the same sales organization, except in special instances.

Again, it is a peculiar fact, but nevertheless true, that mechanics that have operated and worked upon passenger cars do not relish repair work on trucks. In establishments where both trucks and passenger cars are sold it has been noted that the trucks are slighted wherever possible. A good many manufacturers of both passenger and commercial vehicles attempt to market their entire line through one set of dealers or agencies, but upon the whole such procedure has not been very satisfactory unless the agencies are large enough to support separate sales and repair organizations.

**Selection of the Car or Truck.**

Next in logical order after the questions of capital, location, and extent of the lines have been settled, comes the selection of the car or truck to be handled. The different elements to be considered in making this selection may be outlined as follows:

1. Nature of the location and price of the vehicle.
2. Topography of the land.
3. Reputation of the car or truck manufacturer.
4. Advertising done by the manufacturer.
5. The manufacturer's policies—
  - (a) As to direct sales in the agent's territory.
  - (b) Regarding the handling of other lines by the agent.
  - (c) Co-operation and assistance rendered to the agent.

6. The design or merit of the vehicle.
7. Manufacturer's production facilities to insure deliveries of the completed vehicle.
8. Ease with which parts can be obtained.
9. The nature of the manufacturer's agency contract.

#### **Nature of the Location and Price of the Vehicle.**

The needs of prospective users in any territory, which are determined to a large extent by the nature of the location, must be satisfied by any successful agency. In small towns where there is no great amount of heavy hauling and very little concentration of wealth, the choice would naturally fall among the medium or low-priced passenger cars or light delivery trucks. It would be folly to establish an agency for a high-priced car in such a location. In large cities the

range of choice would be increased—medium and high-priced passenger cars and trucks of both small and large capacities having preference. The point to remember is to study the needs of your prospects carefully and make your selection fit those needs.

### **Topography of the Land.**

The character of the country sometimes plays an important part. If the land is hilly, a sturdy design that will meet the requirements of hill climbing or hard pulls is to be preferred. The same selection might apply to sections of the country having sandy roads or a combination of rainy seasons and clay highways. For city driving over paved streets or in level localities blessed with good macadam or gravel roads, cars or trucks with lighter duty motors may prove to be in greater demand. Regions of

high altitude may also influence the design to be selected.

These simple illustrations of the relation between the nature of the country and the selection of the vehicle only serve to emphasize the importance of careful analysis of conditions.

### **Reputation of the Car or Truck Manufacturer.**

The reputation of not only the vehicle itself, but also the manufacturer, must be considered. Cars or trucks which have already demonstrated their merit and which are built by manufacturers thoroughly established in the industry are to be chosen in preference to those built by manufacturers of limited experience. The selection of a new car built by a manufacturer of national reputation, or a car for which the demand is limited to certain localities, may prove to be advantageous, but generally the introduction of any

design that has not proven its worth to the public, except in periods of abnormal demand, always means an uphill fight. Give preference to the manufacturer of long standing. Choose the type of machine which the public wants rather than attempt to educate the public to your own views. By making a wise selection based upon the reputation behind the vehicle, sales resistance can be greatly reduced.

#### **Advertising Done by the Manufacturer.**

Closely related in importance to reputation of the vehicle is the amount of advertising which has been done by the manufacturer. This point is often overlooked. A vehicle which has not only thoroughly demonstrated its merit, but which has been extensively advertised, is a better proposition for an agency than one which is only locally recognized. This becomes

especially true in industrial centers where the population is continually shifting. Advertising by the vehicle maker becomes a distinct asset to the agent.

### **The Manufacturer's Policies.**

The success of an agency is dependent in a large measure upon the sales policies adopted by the manufacturer of the vehicle. These policies are therefore of vital importance to the agent.

Every manufacturer has a duty to perform toward the agent. Their interests are mutual. They must pull together, or co-operate, to reap the greatest advantage from the territory covered. One phase of such co-operation relates to the protection which the manufacturer gives the agent in his territory. By protection is meant the referring of all inquiries or prospects to the agent or the paying of a commission upon every sale in the terri-

tory, regardless of whether made by the manufacturer or the agent, the size of the commission depending upon the part played in the sale by the agent. This is a question over which each manufacturer has control and should be carefully investigated.

Where the particular line which the agent is already handling is limited in scope it sometimes becomes advisable to add a car or truck of another make to the line in order to satisfy the shifting demands of the locality.

While very few manufacturers today insist upon a contract excluding all other lines, this is a point to keep in mind in making the selection of an agency. The agent is virtually a part of the manufacturer's selling organization.

When an agent is in a territory in which he cannot make good with one size, type or make, the wise manufacturer is willing not only

for the agent to take on another non-conflicting line, but even goes so far as to help him obtain another car or truck which he feels will make good in his territory.

A famous car manufacturer once made this statement: "I want to know how much money our agents are making, for if they are not making money, they will not be our agents long. Changing—always changing agents—brings no profit." This statement forcibly brings out the fact that any policy which does not help the agent make money is bound to work to the disadvantage of both agent and manufacturer. This also suggests the need for the rendering of such assistance to the agent as the manufacturer can reasonably give, in the form of direct sales and expert engineering advice by direct factory representatives, helpful advertising, charitable interpretation of the manufacturer's guarantee, educa-

tion of the car or truck user by pamphlets suggesting the proper care and maintenance of the vehicle, and oftentimes of free branch service.

These helpful features are of sufficient importance and bear such a direct relation to the success of the agency that no car agency selection should be made without careful investigation of the extent to which the manufacturer intends to fulfill his co-operative obligation.

### **Design or Merit of the Vehicle.**

In selecting the proper car or truck, the design should be studied from the following angles.

Its adaptability to the territory.

Its ruggedness.

Features of superiority over other designs.

Simplicity of design.

Economy of operation.

Ease with which repairs can be made.

Style.

Riding qualities or comfort.

From the different elements outlined above the sales argument must be developed and everything else being equal, the design suggesting the greatest number of selling features with the greatest economy of operation should have preference. In the case of passenger cars, style sometimes outweighs other selling arguments, but permanent success is more generally the result of good, dependable service rendered to the owner, rather than an appeal to his sense of the artistic, which may prove to be only a passing fancy.

**Manufacturer's Production Facilities  
to Insure Delivery of Completed Vehicles.**

One of the most obvious traits of human nature is to postpone purchases as long as possible and then to insist upon prompt delivery.

Automobiles or trucks form no exception to this rule. Many sales are eventually lost through the inability of the agent to satisfy this human desire for immediate possession. An agent should, therefore, make reasonably sure that the financial and production organization behind the vehicle selected is strong enough to lend assurance of prompt delivery of cars during season. While there are certain abnormal periods of demand, the agent must base his selection upon the idea of permanency and make his analysis of delivery possibilities upon a normal demand.

#### **Ease With Which Parts Can Be Obtained.**

Ability to get deliveries of service parts is vital to the success of any agency. The ordering of duplicate parts must necessarily be done without mistakes or delays, which are fatal to the agent's business. It

seems to be almost universally true that the passenger car owner is in anything but an amiable frame of mind with his car out of commission and while waiting for parts, and the commercial car owner whose business is wholly dependent upon the operation of the truck becomes even more disgruntled. Delays of this kind often transform a "booster" into a "knocker" and are exceedingly harmful to the business. Great care, therefore, should be exercised in associating with a manufacturer who is not only in a position to handle service promptly, but who does not make it his chief aim to acquire the bulk of his money from the sale of such parts. The impression on the part of the vehicle owner that he has been overcharged for spare parts is just as fatal as an unreasonable delay. Most of the well-systematized factories now catalogue the different parts of the vehicle, giving

part numbers or code words, photographs and prices. By this method it is possible to quickly and accurately order any individual part without error and resulting delays.

### **Nature of the Manufacturer's Agency Contract.**

In the past most agency contracts have been extremely favorable to the manufacturer. Recently there seems to be a growing tendency among manufacturers to give ample consideration to the conditions confronting the agent in the formation of sales contracts. Discounts, minimum quantity of vehicles to be taken, stipulated delivery schedules, manufacturer's guarantee, protection of the territory and terms of payment are the principal features to be considered in the negotiation of any agency contract.

It used to be a common custom to give large discounts and territories, the agent dividing up the

territory as he saw fit, but this, as a rule, did not bring the best results to either manufacturer or agent. It is now almost universally conceded that both the discounts and the territory should be under the control of the manufacturer. Discounts are often affected by the number of cars and the stock of service parts and accessories which the agent is able to carry. The season of the year at which the stock can be shipped is also an item to the manufacturer. The agent who is able to finance shipment during the season when sales are lowest can sometimes command a preferred discount.

Occasionally a bonus system has been employed in which the agent, after selling a certain number of cars or trucks, receives a special discount or rebate. In the majority of cases, however, this system has a tendency to cause agents, in the

## 96 *Automobile Salesmanship*

hope of securing this special rebate, to contract for a greater quantity than they can reasonably sell. The difficulty of disposing of these extra cars proves to be the father of price-cutting, which is harmful to agent, manufacturer and motoring public alike.

Guarantees against defective workmanship and material have been fairly well standardized, and generally extend over a period of ninety days.

The customary terms of payment offered the agent consist of a cash deposit at the time the contract is negotiated, the balance being subject to sight draft on delivery of the vehicle, except in cases where special credit arrangements are made. These credit arrangements would naturally depend upon the financing ability of the agent or his financial connections.

## CHAPTER V.

### Methods to be Employed by the Passenger Car or Truck Agency in Advertising.

**A**DVERTISING is a form of propaganda which, when properly applied, greatly reduces sales resistance and paves the way for the salesman.

In any sales transaction the buyer must necessarily pass through four distinct mental stages, viz: (1) Attention; (2) Interest; (3) Desire, that results in: (4) Action, or the Purchase. Advertising can be employed efficiently to secure the buyer's attention and to arouse his interest. It is then the salesman's task to increase the buyer's interest to that point of desire which, with the proper salesmanship, leads to the purchase or

final closing of the sale. Advertising does not detract from the salesman. It rather enables him to concentrate his effort upon the most vital part of the sale, thereby making him doubly efficient.

Since advertising is used almost universally in preparing the field for direct sales effort, the passenger car or truck agent must readily see the importance of giving careful study to such advertising methods as will best link up with local conditions in his territory. We shall therefore attempt to present a few suggestions regarding advertising methods which are available for the agent's consideration.

First of all, the kind and extent of the advertising program upon which any agent enters will depend largely upon the co-operative advertising of the car or truck manufacturer. Some of the larger manufacturers make it their business

to map out local advertising campaigns for the various agents. The agent should, by all means, avail himself of suggestions and advertising secured in this way, as they generally come from a trained and highly competent source.

Advertising can be carried on in such a variety of ways that it is impossible to cover all of them in our limited space, but the more important methods are as follows:

- (a) Local Newspapers.
- (b) Direct by Mail.
- (c) Show Window Display.
- (d) Outdoor Advertising.
- (e) Special Demonstrations.

#### **Newspaper Advertising.**

To get the best results from local newspaper advertising, large space in one or two of the more prominent papers of the community is to be preferred to more frequent and smaller copy in a larger number of papers.

In quite a few towns and cities there are certain days of the week or certain issues that are the object of more local interest than others. If possible, the agent should choose such issues for the appearance of the copy.

Newspaper advertising should, by all means, be done consistently. A large part of the benefit of this particular type of advertising is lost unless the copy appears at regular intervals. Hap-hazard or "hit-and-miss" advertising is money thrown away.

Since the human mind is capable of absorbing only one impression at a time, the best advertising copy which the agent can use is that which covers one selling feature at a time, driving it home in the briefest possible way.

Brevity is an advantage. If you catch the eye and the thought of the newspaper reader you must catch it quickly. The mental atti-

tude of a man reading a newspaper is quite different from the mental attitude of a man reading a magazine, for instance. His mind is generally engrossed in business or the affairs of the day. The agent cannot hope to interest him in lengthy arguments that require much mental study. If he gets an impression from an advertisement he must get it quickly and easily.

The advantage of advertising one feature at a time will be lost unless the ads are run in series—one after the other—at regular intervals. The last of the series should be a summation of the features, or where there are a large number, it sometimes becomes necessary to run in a summation after the appearance of three or four ads covering single selling features. This summary hits the bull's-eye by answering several questions that are likely to occur to the possible buyer of an automobile.

**Direct-by-Mail Advertising.**

One of the valuable methods of advertising available to the agent is the Direct-by-Mail method. As one writer has remarked, "A man's mail will reach him when nothing else will." The possibilities of Direct-by-Mail advertising are just beginning to be realized and to be made use of by agents with highly productive results. Selling letters and folders, specially prepared to fit the peculiar psychology of the locality, have often been the means of increasing sales to an almost incredible degree.

In the direction and preparation of a Direct-by-Mail campaign the advertising staff of the manufacturer can lend valuable assistance. Direct-by-Mail advertising, either in the form of sales letters, catalogues, booklets, or what-not, unless carefully prepared, will be a distinct failure.

Here again it is often advantageous to resort to a series of letters and mailing pieces, each of which cover only one selling feature in a manner that can be absorbed without spending too much time, but which drives home the advertising message with the force of conviction. The buyer's interest may not be aroused until near the end of the series, but constant hammering at regular intervals, each time with a different appeal and some new features which should make the car or truck of interest to the buyer, will gradually strike a responsive chord and awaken the spark of interest, which can easily be fanned into the flame of desire by the application of direct selling effort.

There are a few simple rules which must always be observed to get the best results from Direct-by-Mail advertising:

1. The mailing list should be carefully gone over at regular intervals and checked up for new names and addresses, and the removal of such names as represent dead timber.

2. Typewritten letters are preferable to multigraphed letters. Whenever multigraphed or printed letters are used, great care should be exercised in matching the address with the body of the letter. As a matter of fact, not one reader in ten, in the country or city, can be flim-flammed by an imitation, poorly printed, typewritten letter. Therefore, avoid as near as possible the appearance of a stock letter.

3. Avoid hackneyed truisms, such as "The best is none too good for you," and "the best is the cheapest," and others of that type.

4. Do not sign with a rubber stamp. Every letter should bear a personal signature.

5. Avoid long paragraphs. Make them short and to the point.

6. Adopt a sincere, simple, breezy, conversational style.

7. Don't scatter your argument. Make each paragraph complete.

8. Avoid flippancy and tomfoolery. Sales letters are no place for jingles and jests; the jingle style of advertising may answer the purpose for some commodities, but for a legitimate and comparatively expensive product, such as a passenger car or truck, it can have no permanent value.

### **Show Window Display.**

How to make show windows attractive and to induce the comment of the public is a big question. It cannot be accomplished by merely displaying the various models. The windows must be made so attractive that people will advertise it. A great many effective methods

have been tried, such as the display of a chassis with the inner mechanism of the different units open to the inspection of the public, miniature models arranged to illustrate some of the advantages to be derived in owning the car or truck, and the exhibition of the different parts of the vehicle after being subjected to some unusual test, such as a front axle twisted into a knot to emphasize its toughness. One truck agent, for example, loaded a truck with groceries and near the truck placed display cards, upon which the results and cost figures incidental to the operation of the trucks by grocers, were tabulated. Another used miniature models to illustrate how auxiliaries, such as the hoist and dump bodies, increase the efficiency of the truck.

Another suggestion which has been tried with excellent results was carried out by having a sign painted on heavy cardboard, the

exact length of the window, of one of the principal streets. Several trucks were painted on cut cardboard with the names of the owners of the trucks, and then placed in front of the street scene. The names of the owners were painted in big letters so that the people could know to whom the agent supplied trucks. Special lights were so arranged that the cards could be properly displayed at night. This same method of display might also be applicable to passenger cars in smaller communities, where the names of the prominent are known by the majority of the population.

### **Outdoor Advertising.**

Outdoor advertising is of more value to the agent in the rural communities. The billboards and posters can be placed along the main highways where there is little else to distract the attention of the

motorist. Advertisements of this type, placed along city streets, are generally only one of the many other advertisements of a similar nature which are designed to engage the attention of passersby and are more often than not, passed unnoticed. This type of advertising is used primarily to reach those buyers who are too deeply engrossed in business to read ordinary advertising. Whether the advertisements are painted on the boards or pasted on the shape of posters does not affect the value of outdoor advertising. The difference between painted boards and posters is more of an economical consideration. Painted signs are generally more effective, remain on the boards longer and withstand the elements better than printed posters. If the latter are used, they must be renewed after a drenching rain.

In a general way, outdoor advertising should be used only to supplement other forms of advertising. It should, like every other form of publicity, give a reason or a suggestion. Two or three short lines, composed of terse, short words which contain the meat or the pith of the advertising message, is all that should appear upon the billboard or poster. The great danger is the same danger that confronts the agent in other forms of publicity—the danger of trying to crowd too much into space that can command the attention of the possible buyer for but a few moments.

### **Special Demonstrations.**

Very few buyers will actually purchase either a passenger car or truck without some kind of demonstration that will give him a fair idea of the performance of the vehicle. Consequently, the proper

kind of a demonstration brought to the attention of the buyer in an unusual way has great advertising value.

A few suggestions of successful demonstrations of this nature, which are applicable to both passenger cars and trucks, are outlined, with the hope of giving the reader an idea that can be used to advantage. All of these demonstrations have been tried in various localities with apparent success:

(a) The car or truck was driven up to the buyer's residence or place of business and the buyer invited to look over the details of the mechanism, point by point, or to go with the driver and witness the vehicle in action. This is a very common way of arousing the buyer's interest.

(b) The vehicle was painted a very brilliant color and driven through the streets by a uniformed

driver. A large sign, giving the name of the car and the agent's name and business address and telephone number was placed in a conspicuous place on the car.

(c) A chassis was driven through the streets, stopping frequently at some street corner. The engine was left running, and after the crowd had quickly collected, the agent or some representative explained some of the more important selling features in a way designed to arouse interest, and answered any questions asked in reference to them.

(d) A truck was driven through the streets with a large sign, which read, "The National Cash Register Company drives a truck like this for ——— dollars per day." The same demonstration might be used in the case of a passenger car, as, "John Jones gets 22 miles to the gallon of gas with a car like this,"

## 112 *Automobile Salesmanship*

or "John Jones' repair bill on a car like this was \$—— for three years."

(e) The G. M. C. agent in Southern California filled a 50-gallon tank, mounted on a truck, with gasoline, and started on a tour, stopping at the towns and passing out cards upon which the public were asked to guess the total mileage which the truck would make to empty the tank. A prize was given to the person making the closest guess. This demonstration caused considerable local talk and gossip and created large publicity.

By working in close touch with the manufacturer and by applying a little originality the agent can, if he has the perseverance, augment his sales and his profit through advertising.

## CHAPTER VI.

### Methods Employed in Locating Active Prospective Buyers of Passenger Cars or Trucks.

A LARGE number of the more prominent automobile and truck manufacturers maintain advertising and sales promotion departments for the purpose of locating active prospect leads. These leads are passed on to the distributors in the different localities, who in turn notify the agent. In spite of this active assistance on the part of the manufacturer and distributor, the salesman is obliged, in the majority of cases, to obtain the largest percentage of his prospect leads.

The salesman's success, therefore, depends in large measure

upon his ability to take advantage of every effective means of securing the names of active car or truck prospects to whom he can give most of his time and increase his efficiency by the elimination of wasted sales effort upon those who are not contemplating purchasing or who are not financially able to purchase.

By our emphasis in this book of the importance of having as large a prospect list as possible, we do not care to leave the salesman with the mistaken impression which they sometimes have that their time and energy can be employed to good advantage only when they have live prospects to work on. The real salesman knows by experience that more prospects are *made* than found, and when there are no live prospects in sight you will find the capable salesman instilling the desire for the ownership of a motor car or truck into some person who

later on becomes an actual purchaser. Ofttimes we have seen automobile salesmen, particularly in some of the larger agencies in the cities, hanging around the sales-room waiting for something to turn up, when they should be out in the field with a demonstrator, finding the man who only needs the encouragement of a rousing sales talk to cause him to untie the strings of his pocketbook.

There are, of course, numerous ways and methods of locating the active buyer. We shall endeavor to briefly outline a few of the more important methods employed by the different selling organizations in the full knowledge that not one method or any one combination of methods may be adequate to every locality, which always has its own peculiar problem that sometimes calls for special or unique treatment. The methods described are general in their scope and are

meant only as a means of furnishing suggestion to the wide-awake hustler who is striving for the best there is in automobile salesmanship.

Active prospect leads may be secured from the following classified sources:

1. Satisfied Car or Truck Owners.
2. Local Advertising.
3. Curbstone or Street Demonstrations.
4. Registration of Visitors at the National Automobile Shows or at the Agency.
5. Tips Secured from Salesmen of Allied Lines.
6. A List of Industrial Firms that Can Use Trucks of the Capacity Sold by the Agent.
7. A Registration of Car Owners, Secured from the Secretary of the State in Which the Agency Exists.

8. Advertising or Sales Promotion Departments of the Manufacturer or Distributor.
9. List of Men Financially Able to Own and Operate Motor Cars Secured from the Agency's Banker.

**Satisfied Car or Truck Owners.**

A large number of active prospects can always be secured from the ranks of those who are either driving cars or operating trucks in connection with their business. A satisfied owner is most generally a booster—a dissatisfied owner can do inestimable harm.

Very often we have seen the experience which some friend has had with a certain make or type of car count heavily in the consummation of the sale. Motor car experiences and difficulties are frequently the subject of social conversation between friends and it is quite natural that Mr. Jones, being a friend of

Mr. Smith, should know of his intention to purchase or of his dissatisfaction with the particular car which he may be driving. This information is always open to the aggressive salesman, who makes it a point to keep in touch with Mr. Jones periodically, for the purpose of picking up such tips and of incidentally strengthening his acquaintance for the benefit it might yield later.

Again, in the truck field, business men who are using trucks may have many acquaintances among other business men with whom they trade or have business relations, and through this acquaintance are often consulted relative to their experience in truck operation. This hint of a friend's anticipated purchase of motor trucks will fall into the hands of the salesman or service man who calls on him.

In capitalizing his acquaintance with motor car and truck owners

to the fullest extent by periodic calls as outlined above, the salesman can also take advantage of the opportunity of expressing interest in the continued satisfaction of the owner in the car or truck represented by him and of leaving the owner with the impression of friendly service that will eventually demand his co-operation and patronage.

### **Local Advertising.**

This method of securing prospect leads has already been discussed to some extent in a previous article. The principal thing for the salesman to remember in connection with this phase of our subject is that the very purpose of advertising is educational and if properly applied is used primarily in blazing the trail for direct sales effort by acquainting the potential buyer with (1) the reasons why he should

be a car or truck owner; (2) the superior features of the car or truck advertised which makes it a more desirable buy for him than some competitive make; and (3) by creating sufficient interest in his mind to cause him to make his interest known, or, in any case, to carry a good impression of the vehicle which makes him receptive to the salesman's direct attack.

Local advertising is relied upon to quite an extent in the larger communities, where the salesman does not and cannot have the same opportunity for intimate acquaintance of the possibilities as the salesman in the smaller territory.

### **Curbstone or Street Demonstrations.**

Street demonstrations, while only one form of local advertising, often serve as a convenient means of locating active interest. Any sort of a street demonstration, and par-

ticularly where the vehicle is drawn up to the curb and the motor or some other part of the chassis exposed for inspection, is quick to collect a crowd of bystanders, to whom the merits of the vehicle can be explained and questions answered. The questions asked very frequently serve as a clue to an anticipated purchase, and it is not difficult in the majority of cases to secure the names and addresses of such individuals.

**Registration of Visitors at the National Automobile Shows or at the Agency.**

It is customary for all manufacturers exhibiting at the National Automobile Shows to register the names of all visitors at their booths. These names are classified and are passed on to the distributor and the agent in the locality in which the visitor resides, the attention

of the agent being especially directed to those expressing active interest.

This same method of registration can be carried out locally by the agent who makes it a point to secure all the information possible in regard to any prospect entering his place of business or who resorts to some novel plan of getting interested prospects into his salesroom by furnishing entertainment, such as music at certain hours of the day, etc.

### **Tips Secured from Salesmen in Allied Lines.**

A close acquaintance with salesmen in allied lines is not only desirable for the satisfaction derived from knowing what others engaged in the selling field are doing and accomplishing, but it is equally desirable for the direct assistance which it sometimes lends to the salesman's effort. Tire and acces-

sory men, dealers in used cars, tire repair men, garage owners, etc., are very often informed of people who intend to purchase cars or trucks. At the clubs, business men's luncheons, and other places frequented by men of moderate and considerable means, much valuable information can be gathered regarding new prospects. Salesmen in allied lines are prone to give assistance to their friends wherever possible, and this source of friendly co-operation should be cultivated with zealous care.

**A List of Industrial Firms That Can  
Use Trucks of the Capacity  
Sold by the Agent.**

It would perhaps be interesting to the reader to outline here the proper course to be pursued by a truck salesman in lining up his territory and in locating and analyzing prospects. The method of selling trucks differs essentially from

that of selling passenger cars, in that truck sales generally, and we believe we can say almost universally, are made only after a careful study of the conditions under which the trucks must operate. The securing of a list of industries in the salesman's territory that can use trucks is not enough—the salesman must be familiar with the trucking conditions of each one to the point of being able to show the managing heads a money saving by the purchase of one or more trucks of the capacities suggested by the salesman's analysis of their needs. Therefore familiarity with the conditions of the various firms in the territory is essential to the truck salesman who "makes good." The information which the salesman must have before an analysis can be made can be obtained in a number of ways. Occasionally it must be obtained without the knowledge of the concern itself, but preferably it

may be obtained with the sanction and co-operation of the officers of the company.

The salesman sizes up a firm in a general way, and knows that the work is such that his trucks could be used to advantage, unless there are unusual conditions *not apparent* on the surface. He then approaches whoever is in authority. He states his proposition, and makes the assertion that he believes he can save the firm money by the introduction of his trucks or that the business can be extended or increased, or in other ways advanced, so as to make the introduction of or addition to their trucking capacity advisable. As a rule, the members of the firm are not convinced of the truth of the salesman's statement, and he then obtains permission to learn the methods practiced in the delivery or receiving departments, or even existing conditions in the manufac-

turing process, or in the store, if it happens to be a business house of some description.

Permission being granted, the salesman starts by making the acquaintance of the delivery superintendent or traffic boss. Without the co-operation of this individual it is very hard to learn the true state of affairs. The salesman will be misled, or will not be allowed access to certain figures which are essential to a complete and all-embracing knowledge of the system. If demonstrations are made later on, the trucks will be hampered and many little things done to prevent them from showing their best performance. Cases are known in which, owing to the opposition of the delivery foreman, even more strenuous ways were adopted to make it impossible for the trucks to show what actually could be accomplished.

Hardly less important is the securing of the good-will of the drivers. Unless this is done the demonstrating truck will be blocked by wagons, by bulky goods which must be removed, and loading and unloading will be unusually slow. These are not conditions that exist in all places, but they are often met with and must be recognized and prepared for by the wide-awake truck salesman.

The average man in charge of the delivery system is at once inclined to be antagonistic to any one who proposes to rearrange or suggest anything that can be done to improve the system. He revolts against any suggestion, with the idea that it is meant as a personal impeachment of his own ability to study out the best method of handling the system.

While this condition is not so common now as it was a few years

ago, on account of the fact that hardly an industrial or business firm of medium size exists today which does not have one or more trucks in operation, it is one which the truck salesman must be prepared to encounter and to handle diplomatically.

There is a condition which does exist in a large number of cases however, and which greatly adds to the labor of the salesman in making his analysis of trucking problems, namely, the ignorance on the part of the firm as to the actual cost of delivery by the methods or system employed. He usually finds that even where records are supposed to be accurately kept, many minor items which should legitimately belong to the cost of maintenance are not added in or kept on separate accounts. These items are sometimes sufficient to be the deciding factor in the purchase, and the problem then re-

solves itself into one of gathering together from the various scattered accounts and books all items which rightfully have a place in the salesman's analysis, tabulating them and placing them in concrete form for presentation to the management of the business.

*All truck salesmen should make the most of their opportunity of developing passive into active truck prospects by bringing to the attention of the responsible business heads in their territory the economy to be derived from the proper size and use of trucks.*

**A Registration of Car Owners Secured from the Secretary of the State in Which the Agency Exists.**

A reference to the registration of car owners issued by the secretary of each state will serve to acquaint the salesman with all persons in his territory that have operated a car for more than one season. There

is hardly a man who has driven a car until it shows evidence of wear, of needing repairs, or of being out of style as far as appearance is concerned, who is not susceptible to the so-called "automobile fever." His mind is generally open to any proposal that enables him to dispose of the old car at a reasonable second-hand value and to secure the new one. Furthermore, he is much more apt to be susceptible to such a proposal from the agency with which he has had satisfactory dealings, especially if his car has given him satisfaction.

**List of Prosperous Men Who Are Financially Able to Own and Operate Motor Cars Secured from the Agency's Banker.**

It has been found worth while for the agent or salesman in any locality to secure from his banker a list of those persons who in the estimation of the banker are finan-

cially able to own and operate a motor car. Such a list would include men working for high wages or high salaries, well-to-do business men (wholesale and retail), and prosperous farmers.

The agent or salesman can easily locate those in the list that are already car owners by checking them back against the list of car owners furnished by the Secretary of State. Being financially prosperous and able to own and maintain a motor car, the balance of the names appearing on such a list represent those to whom the proper salesmanship has never been applied.

By putting some of the general methods outlined above into practice, or by devising similar methods, the passenger car or truck salesman will have taken another step toward increased efficiency and the ultimate success for which every true salesman strives.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Follow-Up Methods.

**M**OST automobile manufacturers, dealers and salesmen will tell you that we can't do business in the same manner as it was done several years ago. Methods are constantly changing to keep pace with the industry in general. It was not so many years back that there were automobile dealers who neglected to take an annual inventory, and even today there may be a few who do not think it necessary, or who do not even spend much time on their books, but this type of dealer will generally be found unsuccessful.

This is an age of busy men. Comparatively little time can be spent in carrying out systems that involve considerable red tape.

Consequently any system that is used, either for locating prospects, following them up, or keeping tab on salesmen, must necessarily be as simple as is compatible with results.

In this book we shall try to give, for the benefit of the reader, a brief analysis from the standpoint of the manufacturer, the dealer and the salesman of a few of the many methods of consistently following an automobile or truck prospect after the prospect has been secured.

It is very obvious that there must be the proper correlated effort in following prospects to secure the best results. The manufacturer assists the dealer, and in some cases the salesman. The dealer correlates his effort with that of the manufacturer. The time was when the manufacturer was only concerned in the size of the allotment of cars or trucks which the distributor and dealer were able to take, but in

recent years there has been very serious study given to the question of co-operating with them in the field, and many systems have been devised for assisting in the actual selling of the allotment.

We are just entering a period of keen competition—a period when all dealers will be forced to adopt intensive selling effort to dispose of their cars, and with this competition will come a closer study of conditions in the different territories and new methods of co-operation with the dealers through the sales and advertising departments of the different manufacturers. It is therefore imperative that dealers give more attention to the institution of effective means of meeting the manufacturer half way in the co-operative assistance which will be given by men who are skilled in preparing the prospect for the direct effort of the salesman.

(NAME OF FIRM)

To be mailed in  
each night with orders.

Salesman.....

SALESMAN'S DAILY REPORT.....

DEPT.

Date..... Town.....

Dealers called on	Business	Sells	Next Call	A, B or C Prospect
No. 1.....				
No. 2.....				
No. 3.....				
No. 4.....				

Remarks:

Fig. 1.

The reader has already been familiarized in a previous article with the methods employed in locating five leads for the automobile salesman. One large manufacturer that we have in mind has extended the promotion plan of locating live leads to include an intensive follow-up, consisting of a series of letters which are sent out to the prospect at intervals of ten days, each letter emphasizing some particular feature of the car. If the salesman during his first interview with a prospect finds his interest to be centered on one particular feature, such as the appearance, the economy, or the riding qualities, etc., a specially prepared series of letters is sent to them, strongly emphasizing that particular feature. Copies of these letters, together with the mailing dates, are sent to the dealer, and the salesman's calls are timed accordingly. The mail-

## *Automobile Salesmanship* 137

ing of these letters is handled by means of a card file on the prospect, which automatically provides for mailing on the proper day. This work is carried on by the Sales Promotion Department which, in a good many cases, sends special representatives into the dealers' territory to prepare sales promotion work adapted to the needs of that particular territory.

Another manufacturer that we have in mind maintains a card index of all prospects or inquiries, and each individual inquiry or prospect receives, not a form letter, but a dictated letter giving full and complete information.

All correspondence is attached to the index card, which is filed away and brought up for attention in two weeks, when, if a reply has not been received, another dictated letter is sent to ascertain whether or not the printed matter has been

received and a request for the prospect to fill out a special postcard which is enclosed, with information which enables the dealer to take the matter up more intelligently with the prospect.

The correspondence then goes back into the files for the second time, to reappear in two weeks. At least three letters of this kind are sent, after which the correspondence is filed away, and the index card placed in the files with an indicator attached, which brings the matter to the attention of the dealer in six to eight weeks, when a final letter is sent.

When replies are received after the first or second letter, the prospect is put into a different file and is watched very closely, and invariably a salesman is sent to go into the matter personally with the prospect.

When the inquiry comes in originally the prospect's name is also

Dealers Sales Record (NAME OF FIRM)													
Dealer	Town	County	State										
Allotment													
Deposit													
Other Lines Handled													
	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	
Allotment													
Taken													
On Hand													
Date Visited													

Fig. 2. A card form for keeping record of business done by sub-dealers. A distributor uses this form and it enables him to determine how much stock it is necessary to keep,

placed on the mailing list, and the different pieces of literature covering the mailing list are sent out regularly at intervals of every two or three weeks. The results of such a follow-up campaign have been found to be very beneficial.

On account of the necessity for a large and competent organization in handling the plan just described, the specially prepared form letters series which can be handled largely by clerks is more widely used. Furthermore, the form letters receive more careful study and thought by men who are skilled in the preparation of letter selling talks and advertising literature than can possibly be given to a dictated letter. However, the form letter, no matter how carefully worded or phrased, is very liable to be detected by the prospect, with the result that the personal touch which can be woven into a dictated

letter is lost. There is much to be said in favor of either system.

It very often happens that distributors also handle a line of tractors, farm lighting plants, which makes it necessary to call on the dealers in the territory. It is necessary in such instances that close tab be kept on the salesman. Mr. Harry Brate describes in a recent issue of the *Chilton Tractor Journal* a convenient method of handling such a situation.

Fig. 1 is a reproduction of the daily report used by the salesmen of a certain distributor. This form is mailed in each night and gives the names of the dealers called on that day. It can be extended to include the prospects called on either with or without the dealer. These daily reports are transferred to the dealer's cards when they are received and are kept in a permanent file.

Fig. 2 shows a form used by the same distributor, which enables him to tell just what he is doing each month—how many cars or trucks the dealer has taken and how many the dealer had on hand when the salesman called on him. It is easy to tell, year by year, from this form just about what the dealer's requirement will be, and such information is valuable in determining the size of the allotment which is to be contracted for from the manufacturer. The information is also valuable in helping the dealer gauge his shipments for each month and the amount of stock to have on hand.

A very simple card record system, which can be installed at a very small cost, and one that is suitable for both the dealer and manufacturer, is shown herewith.

Fig. 3 shows one side of the card, while Fig. 4 shows the reverse side.

1-16	2-17	3-18	4-19	5-20	6-21	7-22	8-23	9-24	10-25	11-26	12-27	13-28	14-29	15-30
Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.			
Name .....														
Address (Home) .....														
(Business) .....														
Wants Model .....														
Has ..... Model ..... Year ..... Price .....														
Source of Prospect ..... Has our Catalogue .....														
Salesman .....														
Keen .....														
Hard .....														
Immediate .....														
Future .....														
Agency .....														
Remarks .....														

Fig. 3.

The card records the prospective purchaser's name, address, and all other necessary information. The reverse side records the calls made.

A small cabinet containing the cards will take up a very small amount of desk room, and the time saved in handling prospects will more than pay for the cabinet and cards in a short time. The cards can be filed under the date, prospective purchaser's name or the salesman's name, subdivided by the dates. This particular card is 3" x 5" in size, although any size can be used to advantage as long as they are sufficiently small to enable the salesman to carry them conveniently. An estimate of the ability of the various salesmen, as well as the source of prospects, can be readily obtained from such a card record system.

One live truck dealer classifies prospects into three main divisions



—i. e., live, semi-live, and dead. The live prospect is one that has made a personal, telephone or mail inquiry regarding a motor truck; a semi-live prospect is a man who is in the market, but does not wish to buy until some future date, and the dead prospect is one whose business does not justify the installation of motor service, or because of an unsolvable obligation must purchase elsewhere.

The salesmen use a card index compiled by the office, from which to draw their lead, and after interviewing the prospect they classify them according to their own judgment. Master cards printed in questionnaire form, with spaces for complete information with regard to the prospect, such as nature of business, number of horses used, number of motor trucks used, kind, average haul per day, average number of tons hauled, length of trips,

SUMMARY CARD		OFFICE OF (NAME OF FIRM)			
Name.....	Salesman.....				
Address.....	City.....				
Quotations made on Chassis (Model).....					
Quotations made on Body (Type).....					
Date Call.....					
Date Next Call.....					
Date Call.....					
Date Next Call.....					
Date Call.....					
Date Next Call.....					
Date Letter.....					
Date Next Letter.....					
Date Printed Matter.....					
Date and What Sold.....					

Fig. 5.

etc., remain in the office in a permanent file. The cards are filled out by the salesman and filed in the district where located according to the nature of the business.

In the case of another truck dealer a summary card (Fig. 5) is made out as soon as the prospect is located, and after the salesman has interviewed him, he indicates on this summary card the quotation which has been made on both chassis and body. He also enters the date for the next call. A card file, indexed for the days of the month, is kept for each salesman and the card is placed in the file under the date that he has given for the next call. Each afternoon the files are gone through and the calls to be made on the following day are noted, so that the salesman's calls are outlined for him with the least amount of time and effort. The salesmen report at the office at the

# *Automobile Salesmanship* 149

31	Name .....	
30	Street.....	City.....
29	State.....	Telephone No.....
28	Business .....	
27	Car Now Owned.....	
26	Make	Model Value
25	.....	.....
24	Family.....	(Yes ) (No )
23	Mail Sent.....	
22		Home or Office
21	Office Address.....	
20		
19		
18		
17		
16		
15		
14		
13		
12		
11		
10		
9		
8		
7		
6		
5		
4		
3		
2		
1		

Fig. 6.

end of each day, and the dealer then goes over personally with the salesman the calls he has made, and what he has said and done. The next day, a dictated letter is sent to the prospect, going into the details of the conversation he has had with the salesman, and emphasizing the different points which the salesman believes to be of special interest to him.

This system undoubtedly gives the prospect the impression that the dealer is backing up the salesman and showing interest in that particular transaction.

The most effective means of following prospects which has come to our attention consists of a combination of a card and loose-leaf booklet form as shown in Fig. 6.

Along the left-hand edge of this form are printed the days of the month from one to thirty-one. At the top of the form are spaces for

the information which may be of use to both the dealer and salesman in directing the sale. Below this information the form is ruled to give the date of the call, any special thing of interest which developed during the interval or which may guide successive interviews, and the date on which the salesman wishes to follow the prospect.

These sheets are filed in the office, either under the name of the salesman, the name of the prospect, or the location in which the prospect resides. They are re-grouped by months. Smith's Indicators are then placed above the figure on the left-hand margin corresponding to the day on which the call is to be followed, and the form is filed in the month group in which the call is to be made. For convenience, let us suppose that the calls for the 10th of November are to be located and passed out to the salesman in

their respective territories. All the forms in the November month group having an indicator appearing above the figure 10 on the left-hand margin are pulled out of the file, and the cards distributed to the different salesmen in the territories in which the prospects reside. The salesmen then place the forms in their loose-leaf binder, which makes a very convenient method of carrying them, and preserving their cleanliness. As the calls are made, the different entries are jotted down by the salesman and the forms turned into the office in the evening, where they are again filed as already described, upon the day on which they are to be followed.

In a good many cases the information outlined on the form shown in Fig. 6 is expanded upon a special master card printed in the form of a questionnaire. This master card

has the different days of the month numbered across the top in a manner similar to that shown in Fig. 6. The cards are filed in exactly the same manner as the form which the salesman carries, and are taken from the file each morning, pinned to the form card so that he may have full and complete information before making the interview. This method of carrying master cards as a supplement to the form carried in the salesman's loose-leaf book has a tendency to refresh the salesman's memory with information which cannot be conveniently carried in a condensed form.

It is almost an impossible thing to devise a form or any system which will substantially meet the needs of each particular locality or each particular business. Conditions in different parts of the country are so varied that it is necessary for each dealer to work out his own

## 154 *Automobile Salesmanship*

salvation. It is our sincere wish, however, that the reader may have gained from these brief descriptions of various systems and forms outlined above, a few suggestions which may be applicable to his own particular case. The main thing to remember in devising a follow-up system is to make it simple, but complete.